

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7506

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: DOD SCIENTIST VISITS TO INDIA

1. OVER THE LAST YEAR WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATED WITH DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OR SERVICE LABORATORIES HAVE REQUESTED CLEARANCE TO VISIT INDIA. THE PATTERN APPEARS TO BE THAT THE CLEARANCE REQUESTS ARE SENT OUT THROUGH DEFENSE CHANNELS AND HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN REPEATED TO SECSTATE.

2. MOST RECENTLY NAVAL RESEARCH LABORATORY SCIENTIST AND US CITIZEN K. SHIVANANDAN ARRIVED IN DELHI PREPARATORY TO VISITING SEVERAL INDIAN LABORATORIES TO GIVE LECTURES ON INFRA-RED ASTRONOMY AND TO DISCUSS (AS HE APPARENTLY HAD TWO YEARS AGO ON A SIMILAR VISIT) THE POSSIBLE PROVISION OF \$30,000 IN EQUIPMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONITORING STATION TO COLLECT DATA FROM A SOLAR RADIATION SATELLITE THE UNRL IS ANTICIPATING PUTTING UP IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE. WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE OPERATION TO THE US NAVY, BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MODUS OPERANDI.

3. WE HAVE INFORMED DR. SHIVANANDAN DIRECTLY BUT WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S CALLING MORE GENERALLY TO THE ATTENTION OF DOD AND SCIENTIFIC AGENCIES OF USG THE FACT THAT EMBASSY CONSIDERS POTENTIAL RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS IN INDIA ASSOCIATED WITH US MILITARY OR DEFENSE LABORATORIES OF SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL
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SENSITIVITY. PRIOR TO ANY CONSIDERATION OR DISCUSSION OF ANY

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH INDIAN SCIENTISTS OR INSTITUTIONS, EMBASSY WISHES TO BE CONSULTED SINCE WE MUST RPT MUST IN OUR VIEW HAVE THE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT APPROVAL OF POLITICAL AUTHORITIES IN NEW DELHI IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE POTENTIALLY SERIOUS BACKLASH IN THE FUTURE.

4. WE DO NOT QUESTION THE DESIRABILITY OF SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE OR INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL INDIAN SCIENTISTS IN CONSULTING WITH AND MEETING SCIENTISTS SUCH AS DR. SHIVANANDAN WHO COME FROM US DOD LABORATORIES. NEVERTHELESS INDIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE SHOWN IN THE PAST THAT WHEN THE POLITICAL PRESSURE RISES ON A PARTICULAR SCIENTIFIC PROJECT, THEY ARE OFTEN NOT ABLE OR PREPARED TO DEFEND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION AGAINST POLITICAL CRITICISM. CONSEQUENTLY THE EMBASSY STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT SUCH COOPERATION MUST BE SPECIFICALLY BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF POLITICAL SCIENTIFIC LEVELS IN NEW DELHI AND SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OBTAINED FOR THE EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION ENVISAGED.

5. THE DIFFICULTY WITH DR. SHIVANANDAN'S CASE IS THAT, ALTHOUGH WE KNOW HE IS IN INDIA WITH THE INFORMAL APPROVAL OF, AMONG OTHERS, DR. SATISH DHAWAN, DIRECTOR OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE WHO ALSO IS GOI SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE, WE FEEL FAIRLY SURE DHAWAN HAS NOT CLEARED SHIVANANDAN'S VISIT WITH POLITICAL LEVELS IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. IT TOOK DHAWAN THREE YEARS TO GET GOI CLEARANCE FOR REMOTE SENSING COLLABORATION WITH NASA, SO WE SUSPECT IT IS, SADLY, UP TO US TO SEE THAT GOI POLITICAL LEVELS ARE OFFICIALLY INFORMED. TO DO THIS WE NEED EARLY, DETAILED, FORMAL, DESCRIPTIONS OF PROSPECTIVE VISITS AND PARTICULARLY WHETHER THEY ARE DESIGNED TO LEAD TO SPECIFIC COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS.
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